CLAIMS:

1. A retractor retaining device for retaining a retractor from a retractor support in a retraction position within a surgical wound, the device comprising:

a main body attachable to the retractor support; and

a flexible loop detachably attached at one end to the main body for engaging a proximal end of the retractor such that the retractor is retained in the retraction position.

2. The device of claim 1 wherein the flexible loop is attached such that the loop may be adjusted in size for engaging the proximal end of the retractor.

3. The device of claim 1 and further including an attaching mechanism that engages and attaches the retaining device to the retractor support.

4. The device of claim 3 wherein the retractor support has a plurality of apertures and the attaching mechanism has an aperture engaging member for engaging one of the apertures.

5. The device of claim 4 wherein the aperture engaging member has a plurality of resilient fingers that are insertable into the one of the apertures to engage surfaces of the one aperture.

6. The device of claim 5 wherein the fingers define a bore and the attaching mechanism has a peg movable within the bore and wherein the peg moves the resilient fingers in an outwardly radial direction to engage surfaces of the aperture.

7. The device of claim 1 wherein the loop includes a flexible cord fixedly attached to the main body at a first end and detachably attached to the main body at a second end such that the length of the loop is adjustable.

8. The device of claim 7 wherein the main body includes a V-type slot and wherein the second end of the loop is engageable within the V-type slot such that the second end of the cord is detachably attached to the main body.

9. A retractor support for retaining a retractor in a retraction position within a surgical wound, the support comprising:

a support member positioned near the surgical wound; and

a flexible loop detachably attached at least at one end to the support member and engaging a proximal end of the tractor such that the retractor is retained in the retraction position.

10. The support of claim 9 wherein the flexible loop is attached such that the loop may be adjusted in size for engaging the proximal end of the retractor.

11. The support of claim 9 and further including an attaching mechanism that engages and attaches the flexible loop to the support member.

12. The support of claim 11 wherein the support member has a plurality of apertures and the attaching mechanism has an aperture engaging member for engaging one of the apertures.

13. The support of claim 12 wherein the aperture engaging member has a plurality of resilient fingers extending into one of the apertures and engaging surfaces of the one of the apertures.

14. The support of claim 13 wherein the fingers define a bore and the attaching mechanism has a peg movable within the bore and wherein the peg moves the resilient fingers in an outwardly radial direction to engage surfaces of the aperture.

15. The support of claim 11 wherein the loop includes a flexible cord fixedly attached to the attaching mechanism at a first end and detachably attached to the attaching mechanism at a second end such that the length of the loop is adjustable.

16. The device of claim 7 wherein the attaching mechanism includes a V-type slot and wherein the second end of the loop is engageable within the V-type slot such that the second end of the cord is detachably attached to the attaching mechanism.

17. A retraction device comprising:

a retractor support member for positioning near a surgical wound;

a retractor having a proximal end and a distal end, the distal end for insertion into the surgical wound; and

a flexible loop secured to the retractor support member for engaging the proximal end of the retractor in a manner that retains the retractor in a retraction position within a surgical wound.

18. The device of claim 17 wherein the flexible loop is attached such that the loop may be adjusted in size for engaging the proximal end of the retractor.

19. The device of claim 17 and further including an attaching mechanism that engages and attaches the flexible loop to the retractor support.

20. The device of claim 19 wherein the retractor support has a plurality of apertures and the attaching mechanism has an aperture engaging member for engaging one of the apertures.

21. The device of claim 20 wherein the aperture engaging member has a plurality of resilient fingers extending into the one of the apertures and engaging surfaces of one of the apertures.

22. The device of claim 21 wherein the fingers define a bore and the attaching mechanism has a peg movable within the bore and wherein the peg moves the resilient fingers in an outwardly radial direction to engage surfaces of the aperture.

23. The device of claim 17 wherein the loop includes a flexible cord fixedly attached to the attaching mechanism at a first end and detachably attached to the attaching mechanism at a second end such that the length of the loop is adjustable.

24. The device of claim 23 wherein the attaching mechanism includes a V-type slot and wherein the second end of the loop is engageable within the V-type slot such that the second end of the cord is detachably attached to the attaching mechanism.

25. A method of holding a surgical retractor in a retraction position within a surgical wound, the method comprising:

providing a support member near the surgical wound;

inserting a distal end of a retractor within the surgical wound and manually positioning the retractor in the retraction position; and

securing the retractor in the retraction position by engaging a proximal end of the retractor with a flexible loop that is attached to the support member

26. The method of claim 25 and further comprising:

adjusting the size of the loop by disengaging one end of the loop from the support member and re-engaging the loop to the support member with a different loop length.

27. The method of claim 26 wherein the loop is engaged or disengaged by engaging a V-shaped slot.

28. The method of claim 25 wherein the loop is positioned around the proximal end of the retractor.